

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 91

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY IMA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY QUITO

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS: PFOR VE PE EC

SUBJ: VENEZUELAN REACTION TO EVENTS IN PERU AND ECUADOR

SUMMARY: THE GOV APPEARS SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LIMA AND QUITO. HOWEVER EVENTS IN LIMA AND QUITO, COMBINED WITH STATEMENTS BY A VENEZUELAN GENERAL IN MONTEVIDEO ABOUT THE "BROTHERHOOD" OF THE MILITARY IN THE AMERICAS HAS PROMPTED FRESH SPECULATION HERE OVER CONSPIRACIES BY THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY AND REAFFIRMATION OF THE STRENGTH OF DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICIAL GOV REACTION TO THE RECENT EVENTS IN PERU AND ECUADOR HAVE REFLECTED THE SATISFACTION OF VENEZUELAN LEADERS OVER BOTH THE OVERTHROW OF VELASCO ALVARADO AND THE CONTINUATION IN POWER OF RODRIGUEZ LARA. ON SEP 2, THE VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD CONTINUE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE NEW GOVT OF PERU "WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY." MOST RESPONSIBLE OBSERVERS HERE

APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THE MORALES BERMUDEZ GOVT WILL BE MORE LIBERAL AND MODERATE THAN THE VELASCO ALVARADO REGIME. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS REPORTEDLY WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS GENERAL MORALES BERMUDEZ. SEP 7 ISSUE OF RESUMEN NEWS MAGAZINE REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ MET PRIVATELY WITH MORALES IN BOLIVIA DURING PEREZ'S EARLY AUGUST VISIT THERE AND WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY HIM. RESUMEN EDITORIALIZES THAT THE EXPULSION OF VELASCO, WHO SHARPLY CRITICIZED OPEC COUNTRIES DURING HIS SPEECH TO THE LIMA CONFERENCE ON THE NON-ALIGNED, BRIGHTENS PROSPECTS FOR LATIN AMERICAN UNITY AND PERUVIAN-VENEZUELAN FRIENDSHIP.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE ATTEMPTED COUP IN QUITO, PRESIDENT PEREZ ON SEP 1 TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE WAS SATISFIED THAT THE ECUADORIAN GOVT HAD MAINTAINED ITS CONTINUITY, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF VENEZUELA'S CLOSE TIES WITH ECUADOR THRU OPEC AND THE ANDEAN PACT. GONZALO BARRIOS, PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS AND OF THE RULING ACCION DEMOCRATICA PARTY, ALSO WELCOMED THE CONTINUITY OF THE RODRIGUEZ LARA GOVT. BARRIOS OBSERVED THAT HAD THE COUP IN QUITO SUCCEEDED, THE NEW GOVT MIGHT WELL HAVE CHOSEN A "REACTIONARY, PRO-IMPERIALIST, ANTI-OPEC" PATH.

3. EVENTS IN LIMA AND QUITO HAVE ALSO STIRRED DISCUSSION HERE OF THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL LIFE. FURTHER STIMULATING THIS DISCUSSION WERE PRESS REPORTS ON SEP 1 THAT BRIG. GENERAL FELIPE PARRAGA NUNEZ, VENEZUELAN ARMY OPERATIONS CHIEF, COMMENTED AT AN INTER-AMERICAN ARMY CHIEFS PREPARATORY CONFERENCE IN MONTEVIDEO THAT IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR VARIOUS POLITICAL TENDENCIES, ALL THE SOLDIERS OF THE AMERICAS WERE JOINED BY A BASIC "BROTHERHOOD OF THE SWORD." HE REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT, "THE SOLDIERS OF AMERICA ARE FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME AND OUR DIFFERENCES ARE ONLY IN THE COLOR OF OUR UNIFORMS."

4. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON SEP 2, JUST PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING IN LONDON, GONZALO BARRIOS CAUTIONED THE PRESS AGAINST MAKING TOO MUCH OUT OF GENERAL PARRAGA'S STATEMENT AND HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE MONTEVIDEO MEETING. HE WARNED THAT IT WAS VERY BAD FOR THE PRESS TO SPECULATE "WITH SUCH DILIGENCE" ABOUT SUPPOSED MILITARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSPIRACIES IN VENEZUELA. BARRIOS SAID, "IT IS A DANGEROUS AND ALMOST UNPATRIOTIC GAME" TO MAKE ANY STATEMENTS WHICH CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT MILITARY OFFICERS ARE CONSPIRING AGAINST DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA. ASKED BY A JOURNALIST IF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING IN LONDON WOULD CONSIDER THE "RESURGENCE OF MILITARISM" IN LATIN AMERICA, BARRIOS PREDICTED THAT THE PARLIAMENTARIANS WOULD FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES.

5. ON SEP 3, A JOURNALIST FROM CARACAS DAILY EL UNIVERSAL ASKED INTERIOR MINISTER OCTAVIO LEPAGE ABOUT RECURRING RUMORS OF A MILITARY COUP IN VENEZUELA. LEPAGE REPLIED THAT HIS MINISTRY HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY CONCRETE REPORTS WHICH WOULD WARRANT AN INVESTIGATION AND THAT THE VENEZUELAN ARMED FORCES FULLY SUPPORTED THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE VENEZUELAN OIL INDUSTRY NOT FOR POLITICAL BUT FOR PATRIOTIC REASONS. LEPAGE VIEWED WITH CONFIDENCE THE FUTURE OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY, WHICH HE BELIEVED HAD LED THE COUNTRY OUT OF STAGNATION AND BACKWARDNESS. ECHOING THIS THEME, AN EDITORIAL IN SEP 14 ISSUE OF RESUMEN OBSERVED THAT REGIMES OF FORCE, SUCH AS THE VELASCO GOVT, WHICH PURPORT TO "ESTABLISH ORDER" AND ASSUME TOTAL STATE CONTROL OF THEIR NATIONAL ECONOMY, ONLY LEAVE THEIR COUNTRIES IN A STATE OF THE MOST COMPLETE CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC DISORDER.

6. COMMENT: DRAMATIC POLITICAL MOVES BY THE MILITARY IN PERU AND ECUADOR-- AND UNFORTUNATE STATEMENTS BY GENERAL PARRAGA IN MONTEVIDEO-- WERE BOUND TO CAUSE RENEWED SPECULATION HERE ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN VENEZUELA. IMPRESSION CREATED BY VENEZUELAN LEADERS IS THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN STOCK OF SITUATION AND FIND DEMOCRACY AS SAFE AS EVER IN VENEZUELA AND PROSPECTS IMPROVED FOR CLOSE TIES WITH PRO-OPEC GOVTS IN LIMA AND QUITO.  
SHLAUDEMAM

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